

2011-
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Test Specifications

English Language Proficiency Assessment English Language Proficiency Reassessment

This document summarizes the test specifications of the Reading and Writing Components of the ELPA/R.

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Test Specifications
English Language Proficiency Assessment (Grade 9)
English Language Proficiency Reassessment (Grades 11 and 12)

Overview

The English Language Proficiency Assessment/Reassessment (ELPA/R) is an assessment of students' literacy abilities based on the *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum Outcomes (grade 8)* and the *New Brunswick Provincial Achievement Standards in Reading and Writing (end of grade 8)*. This aligns with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) definition of functional literacy. Data obtained from the ELPA/R provides information about individual student achievement and provides a perspective on trends in school, district, and provincial achievement in literacy.

ELPA

The English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) is comprised of a Reading Comprehension Component and a Writing Component. It is written by all students in grade 9 and is a Graduation Requirement unless an exemption is sought. Both components are scored separately and students must obtain a minimum score of Appropriate Achievement (AA) in both components in order to meet this requirement. The ELPA is administered during the January examination period.

ELPR

The English Language Proficiency Reassessment (ELPR), which is identical to the ELPA, is written by students in grades 11 and 12 who have previously scored Experiencing Difficulty (ED) in one or both components of the ELPA or ELPR unless an exemption is sought. Students rewrite only those components in which they have not obtained a score of AA. The ELPR is administered during the January examination period.

Cases in which students have previously obtained a literacy credential on a high school provincial literacy assessment from another province will be considered. The appropriate documentation must be forwarded to the Assessment and Evaluation Branch for approval. Literacy credentials from outside Canada will not be considered.

Reading Comprehension

The Reading Comprehension Component consists of 50 selected response (multiple choice) items based on a selection of literary and information texts. Students read the passages and indicate their responses in the booklet, which is later machine scored. Students have 90 minutes to complete this component with up to 100% extra time available as a universal accommodation. Texts and items for the assessment are selected by a committee of New Brunswick educators based on the *ELA Curriculum Outcomes (Grade 8)* and the *Provincial Reading Achievement Standards (End of Grade 8)*.

The provincial standards outline two specific categories of text: literary and information. Three levels of comprehension response are detailed within the provincial standards: literal, inferential/interpretive, and personal/critical/evaluative. Item selection committees choose questions that measure students' abilities to respond to both categories of text on all of these levels. This allows individual results to be reported based on achievement in each genre and level of response as well as overall.

The document titled "ELPA/R Test Specifications: Reading Comprehension" on page 3 provides a breakdown of the Reading Comprehension Component by text categories and comprehension responses. The document also indicates the number of questions assigned to each category and comprehension response level.

The ELPA/R aligns with the *Provincial Reading Achievement Standards (End of Grade 8)*; however, not all aspects of these standards can be measured effectively in a selected response format. The document titled "Provincial Reading Achievement Standards (End of Grade 8) Appropriate for Multiple Choice Item Format" on pages 4-5 provides the specific elements of the comprehension responses that are appropriate for this assessment format. It should be noted that on-going classroom assessment of these specific bullets is not limited to selected response questions such as multiple choice. Comprehensive formative assessment in the classroom will continue to be an effective measure of all aspects of the *Provincial Reading Achievement Standards*.

The *Administration of Provincial Assessments Protocols and Procedures 2010 (Revised)* found on the portal at <https://portal.nbed.nb.ca/tr/AaE/Pages/default.aspx> provides detailed information on the administration of the Reading Comprehension Component of the ELPA/R.

For information on Exemptions and Accommodations, please refer to *Protocols for Accommodations and Exemptions (2010)* which can be found on the portal: <https://portal.nbed.nb.ca/tr/AaE/Pages/default.aspx>.

ELPA/R Test Specifications: Reading Comprehension

	Literary Texts		Information Texts	
	Continuous Prose (2 passages)	Non-Continuous Prose and Poetry (2 passages)	Continuous Information Text (2 passages)	Non-Continuous Information Text (2 passages)
Literal Responses (20%)	5 items		5 items	
Inferential/Interpretive Responses (60%)	15 items		15 items	
Personal/Critical/Evaluative Responses (20%)	5 items		5 items	
Total	25 items		25 items	

Literary Texts

Continuous Prose may include short stories, myths, legends, drama, etc.

Non-Continuous Prose and Poetry may include poems, song lyrics, comics, excerpts from graphic novels, etc.

Information Texts

Continuous Information Text may include articles, descriptive reports, short biographies, etc.

Non-Continuous Information Text may include charts, graphs, maps, recipes, schedules, advertisements, graphic hybrid texts, etc.

For further description of Text Complexity and the characteristics of both Literary Text and Information Text, please refer to the *Reading Achievement Standards (End of Grade 8)* at

<https://portal.nbed.nb.ca/tr/cd/Pages/default.aspx>

Provincial Reading Achievement Standards (End of Grade 8) Appropriate for Multiple-Choice Item Format	
Comprehension Responses (Appropriate Achievement)	Comprehension Responses (Strong Achievement)
<p>Literal Response– “Reading the Lines”</p> <p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Respond accurately to most literal questions; skim large amount of text in search of information, locate literal information from a variety of texts B. Identify key story elements (setting, characters, events, problem/resolution, theme/lesson) of a narrative text; explain how events are related to the theme C. Distinguish between main ideas and supporting details; concisely summarize key information 	<p>Literal Response– “Reading the Lines”</p> <p>Students demonstrating strong achievement respond to questions/tasks described at the appropriate level with overall accuracy and precision. They also</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> D. Distinguish between important and unimportant details
<p>Inferential/Interpretive Response– “Reading Between the Lines”</p> <p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Make logical inferences about multiple complex characters (motivations, traits, feelings or personality), and story events; describe relationships among characters and effect on the plot or overall theme B. Interpret relationships among ideas to draw conclusions (e.g. plot, sequence, cause/effect, problem/solution) or make comparisons 	<p>Inferential/Interpretive Response– “Reading Between the Lines”</p> <p>Students demonstrating strong achievement respond to questions/tasks described at the appropriate level with overall accuracy and precision. They also</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E. Demonstrate a solid understanding of how story events are interrelated F. Provide thoughtful inferences (i.e., inferences that require more thoughtful engagement with the text)

<p>C. Use context clues and prior knowledge to explain the meaning of new vocabulary/technical terms; interpret subtle shades of meaning, and figurative and descriptive language; interpret symbols (objects, events, motifs) used by the author to convey meaning</p> <p>D. Interpret/use text features to understand the text (headings and subheadings, cutaways, legends, diagrams, maps, graphs, glossaries, captions, charts, feature boxes, sidebars); make general inferences using this information</p>	
<p>Personal/Critical/Evaluative Response— “Reading Beyond the Lines”</p> <p>Students</p> <p>A. Make personal connections: compare/contrast with relevant prior knowledge and make logical text-to-text, text-to-world comparisons; connect characters within and across texts/genres by circumstances, traits, or actions</p> <p>B. Explain how the different elements of an author’s style/techniques (e.g. dialect, descriptions, figurative language, flashbacks, foreshadowing, symbolism) create meaning and reaction</p> <p>C. Respond critically to texts: recognize language used to manipulate, persuade, or control; detect prejudice, stereotyping and bias</p> <p>D. Evaluate purpose, structure, and characteristics of a variety of text forms (e.g. short story, ballad, report, explanation, persuasive, autobiography, science fiction, fantasy)</p>	<p>Personal/Critical/Evaluative Response— “Reading Beyond the Lines”</p> <p>Students demonstrating strong achievement respond to questions/tasks described at the appropriate level with overall accuracy and precision. They also</p> <p>E. Make insightful and sometimes sophisticated connections</p>

Writing

The Writing Component of the ELPA/R consists of two sections, Writing I and Writing II. In each section, students independently complete a piece of writing in response to a writing prompt they have selected from a variety of prompts provided. Students have 60 minutes to complete each section with up to 100% extra time available as a universal accommodation. Writing prompts are developed by a committee of New Brunswick educators based on the *ELA Curriculum Outcomes (Grade 8)* and the *Provincial Writing Achievement Standards (End of Grade 8)*. In both Writing I and Writing II students are also given the option of selecting a topic of their own choice.

Students' writing is scored by a committee of New Brunswick educators based on the traits of writing outlined within the provincial standards: content, organization, word choice, voice, sentence structure, and conventions. Because the provincial standards specify that students must demonstrate control of each trait in order to meet the standard, each trait is given equal weight and students are expected to achieve a rating of at least Appropriate Achievement (AA) in each trait in order to pass the Writing Component. This allows individual results to be reported based on achievement in each trait of writing as well as overall. Writing I and Writing II are both assessed. The stronger of the two pieces is scored according to the traits of writing and receives the final evaluation.

The document titled "ELPA/R Test Specifications: Writing" found on page 7 indicates the text forms students are invited to produce in both Writing I and Writing II.

The Writing Instructions on page 8 and the Revising and Editing Checklist on page 9 will be found in the student booklet. The Writing Prompts handouts on pages 10 and 11 provide a template of what will be distributed to students during the Writing Component.

The *Administration of Assessments Protocols and Procedures 2010 (Revised)* found at <https://portal.nbed.nb.ca/tr/AaE/Pages/default.aspx> provides detailed information on the administration of the Writing Component of the ELPA/R.

For information on Exemptions and Accommodations, please refer to *Protocols for Accommodations and Exemptions (2010)* which can be found on the portal: <https://portal.nbed.nb.ca/tr/AaE/Pages/default.aspx>.

ELPA/R Test Specifications: Writing

Writing I	Writing II
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Memoir• Biography/Autobiography• Narrative• Topic of Personal Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persuasive• Descriptive• Explanatory• Topic of Personal Choice
<p>The <i>Provincial Writing Achievement Standards</i> include a wide range of text forms; however, not all of the forms are appropriate for a large-scale demand writing assessment format. The text forms listed above are measurable in this format. Students are not to submit a poem, questions/answers, or a research report using research materials.</p>	

For further description of Text Forms and their characteristics, please refer to the *Writing Achievement Standards (End of Grade 8)* located on the portal at <https://portal.nbed.nb.ca/tr/cd/Pages/default.aspx>

Writing I

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Time: 60 Minutes (with up to 60 extra minutes if needed)

You have been given a Writing I Prompts handout with four writing prompts. Read all of them carefully and choose only one. Produce an independent piece of writing of approximately 200-250 words (about two pages).

- **Plan:** Brainstorm, plan and organize your ideas on page 35. (approximately 10 minutes)
- **Draft:** Develop your rough draft on pages 36, 38, 40 and 42. (approximately 20-25 minutes)
- **Revise and Edit:** Use the checklist on page 34 to revise and edit your draft. You are encouraged to use a dictionary and thesaurus. (approximately 10-15 minutes)
- **Final Copy:** Complete your final copy on pages 37, 39, 41 and 43. (approximately 10-15 minutes)

PLEASE DO NOT USE YOUR REAL NAME OR MAKE REFERENCE TO YOUR OWN COMMUNITY BY ITS REAL NAME ANYWHERE IN YOUR PIECE OF WRITING. YOU MAY INCLUDE FICTITIOUS NAMES AND PLACES.

For educational purposes only, it is possible that your composition (which would remain anonymous) could be selected for publication in a booklet of student writing samples for distribution to schools.

Revising and Editing Checklist

Your writing will be evaluated based on the Provincial Writing Achievement Standards. This checklist, based on the criteria for Appropriate Achievement, will help you with your revising and editing.

Content

- ☐ I selected a specific topic with a main idea.
- ☐ I included relevant ideas/events.
- ☐ I supported my ideas with effective details.

Organization

- ☐ I used my introduction to let my readers know what I would be writing about.
- ☐ I put my ideas into a logical order and organized them into paragraphs.
- ☐ I used transitions between and within paragraphs to connect my ideas.
- ☐ I provided an appropriate conclusion.

Word Choice

- ☐ I included interesting words and specific language (strong nouns and verbs, colourful adjectives and adverbs).
- ☐ I used figurative language (e.g. metaphor, analogy, symbolism) where appropriate.

Voice

- ☐ I made my reader interested in my topic.
- ☐ I showed that I care about my topic.
- ☐ I created strong feeling, energy, and individuality.

Sentence Structure

- ☐ I included a variety of sentence structures.
- ☐ I included a variety of sentence lengths and beginnings to make my writing flow.

Conventions

- ☐ I included internal punctuation (commas, semi-colons, colons, dashes, hyphens, parentheses, and apostrophes) and I have correctly paragraphed any dialogue.
- ☐ I used correct spelling.
- ☐ I used correct grammar (subject/verb agreement, verb tense, all parts of speech, numbers, contractions, plurals).

Writing I Prompts

Read all of the following writing prompts carefully and choose only one. Produce an independent piece of writing of approximately 200-250 words (about two pages).

Choose one of the following:

- Prompt #1
- Prompt #2
- Write in response to the picture on the back of this handout. You may use one of the following text forms: memoir, narrative, or biography/autobiography.
- Write about a topic of your own choice. You may use one of the following text forms: memoir, narrative, or biography/autobiography.

Note: Your writing should not be in the form of poetry, questions/answers, or research reports using research materials.

Please, DO NOT use your real name or make reference to your own community by its real name anywhere in your piece of writing. You may include fictitious names and places.

Writing II Prompts

Read all of the following writing prompts carefully and choose only one. Produce an independent piece of writing of approximately 200-250 words (about two pages).

Choose one of the following:

- Prompt #1
- Prompt #2
- Prompt #3
- Write about a topic of your own choice. You may use one of the following text forms: persuasive, descriptive, or explanatory.

Note: Your writing should not be in the form of poetry, questions/answers, or research reports using research materials.

Please, DO NOT use your real name or make reference to your own community by its real name anywhere in your piece of writing. You may include fictitious names and places.
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